

IDAHO DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE ABSTRACT

Applicant Name: Idaho Department of Labor

Project Title: Idaho Disability Employment Initiative

Contact: Gordon Graff, State Disability Coordinator

The Idaho Disability Employment Initiative will leverage resources using collaborative partnerships to achieve sustainable systems change that leads to youth with disabilities obtaining their employment goals through improved access to education, career pathways and engagement with the business community. The objectives of the initiative were developed around outcome measures identified by the Idaho Employment First Consortium, whose members—along with those of the Idaho Interagency Council on Secondary Transition—provided the input used as a basis for the project design:

Objective 1: Better collaboration across partner organizations to increase the ability of youth with disabilities to participate in education, training and employment opportunities.

Objective 2: Improved communication and coordination of services around individual job seekers to better leverage resources available through multiple systems.

Objective 3: Enhanced support for youth making transitions to work or higher education using key educational and career development strategies from the “Youth Guideposts for Success.”

Objective 4: Greater economic self-sufficiency for SSA beneficiaries through benefits counseling and the use of work incentives, including Ticket to Work.

Objective 5: Expanded engagement of the business sector as a partner in developing career pathways for youth with disabilities in high-growth industries.

Strategic delivery components used to achieve the objectives will be: 1) Partnerships and Collaboration, 2) Integrated Resource Teams, 3) Integrating Resources and Services, Blending and Braiding Funds, Leveraging Resources, and 4) *Youth Guideposts for Success*. The following measures will identify progress made using these strategies:

- Increase in the number of individuals with disabilities working in their communities.
- Increase in the number of employers hiring individuals with disabilities.
- Increase in the employment rate for youth with disabilities completing high school.
- Increase in the number of individuals using work incentives.
- Increase in the number of employers creating internships and mentorships.
- Policy changes identified that would reinforce leveraging of resources for better attainment of objectives 1-5.

The scope of the initiative is statewide and will provide at least 60 youth with disabilities per year with case management services in reaching their education and employment goals. Specific measurements will include increases in youth entering and staying in employment; increased wages, gains in education and certifications/credentials, increase in the number of youth served through the American Job Center system along with co-enrollment in partner agency services, and increased use of the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program.

The initiative will build on exemplary service delivery activities identified through the project's successes as well as promising practices from Idaho's previous Disability Program Navigator initiative and those shared by other states for replication.